

Erle Leichty, with a contribution by **Grant Frame** and the editorial assistance of **Jamie Novotny**, **Matthew T. Rutz**, and **Amy E. Barron**: *The Royal Inscriptions of Esarhaddon, King of Assyria (680–669 BC) (RINAP 4)*. Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2011. xxxv, 352 S. CD-Rom. ISBN 978-1-57506-209-9. Preis: \$ 89,50.

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Fifty-five years after Borger's pioneering work made available the royal texts in a comprehensive edition for generations of scholars,¹ the new volume of the RINAP series is a most welcome addition to our knowledge of Esarhaddon's political message. It updates the editions on the basis of recent studies (as illustrated by references and bibliographical notes provided for each text), includes some additions, and in some cases fosters a change of perspective that shifts the focus from the content of the narrative – or the “episodes” by which Borger divided the longer inscriptions so that they could be easily compared in the various documents – to the text as a whole. Here the editor's view (p. xxiif.) focusses on the inscription, which may be classified as *text* (“an inscription that existed in antiquity and that may be represented by a number of more or less duplicate exemplars”) or *exemplar* (“a single inscription found on one object”). The criteria to distinguish texts from exemplars is the presence of major variants (= essentially non-orthographic), which characterize a text, and of minor variants (= orthographic), which characterize exemplars of the same text. These criteria underlie the decision to edit the text as a *master text* (with indication of the variants, either on the same page or at the end of the book, while in the scores transliterations of inscriptions attested in multiple exemplars are provided in full).

Leichty follows two criteria for establishing the order of the texts: a) the city where the dedicated building or monument was located – thus following Borger's ordering criterion – or, if this information is not present, the text's provenance; b) the type of object bearing the inscription.

¹ Die Inschriften Asarhaddons, Königs von Assyrien (Graz 1956). Volume 4 of the RINAP series edits 143 inscriptions of Esarhaddon, in some cases illustrated by nice photographs, 29 texts of uncertain attribution and varying length (1001–1029), and 10 texts belonging to members of the royal family or entourage (2001–2010); introduces them by a general presentation of Esarhaddon's reign and achievements, a description of the inscriptions corpus, references to previous studies, dating and chronology with related problems (including concordances or discrepancies with the Chronicles), and includes at the end a list of variants, indexes, concordances and scores (in CD-ROM). Some texts (118–129, 131–139, 1010) were also edited in RIMB 2.

The new edition thus facilitates reading and comparing each inscription as a whole within the framework of the communicative system orchestrated by Esarhaddon and his scribes, although, when a specific monument is not mentioned and inscriptions are only partially preserved, it seems difficult to state the relationship between different texts – as, e.g., in the case of texts 99–101 from Nineveh which share some sentences with the stela from Zinçirli (no. 98) – and stick to a fully coherent ordering method.

1. The corpus of Esarhaddon's inscriptions comprehends documents of varying format and style, from extensive historical accounts on prisms and cylinders to brief declarations of ownership on different kinds of objects (as illustrated by the table on pp. 3f. of the volume). The latter include architectural elements, vessels, jewels, and booty items, such as the two amphoras from Assur (texts 70–71) identified by their inscription as booty from the treasure of Abdi-Milkūti of Sidon; one of them even bears an Egyptian hieroglyphic inscription, thus providing a nice example of the function of war booty as offering and/or ostentation item.²

Prisms and cylinders record building activities in various sites: the construction, restoration, and dedication of palaces, temples, or statues – a wealth of references that contrasts with the scarcity of material testimonies and identifiable architectural remains – as summarized in the volume introduction on p. 3. Inscriptions accompanying wall reliefs do not occur in Esarhaddon's corpus, although the king declares: “Through the craft of the engravers, I depicted on it the might of the god Aššur, my lord (and) the deeds that I had accomplished in enemy lands (*danān Aššur bēliya epšēt ina mātāti nakrāti ēteppušu ina šipir urrakūti ēsiqa qerebša*)” (1, vi 28). Both the expression *šipir urrakūte* (also used by Sargon) and the verb *esēqu* appear to be learned and quite infrequent expressions (cf. CAD *sub v.*); *esēqu* is employed in text 104 to describe the representation of Esarhaddon's name in

² The amphoras should be considered together with the Egyptian statues found in the area of the *ēkal māšarti* at Nebi Yunus, see Scott/McGinnis (1990, 64).

“hieroglyphs/astroglyphs” in inscriptions on clay,³ and it might also refer to the figurative representations on glazed bricks documented by some fragmentary exemplars from Nimrud depicting the king’s Egyptian campaigns,⁴ thus attesting to the figurative display of the royal conquests (although the use of sculpted orthostats has not been clearly documented until now).⁵

When their provenience is known, prisms and cylinders appear not only to have been deposited in the building they commemorate, but turn up more widely, as attested e.g. by the numerous exemplars of text 1, coming not only from Nineveh, but also from Assur and Susa, as well as by the presence of texts referring to the restoration of Babylon in Assur, Nineveh, and Sippar. They appear moreover to be updated, with variant versions which add details and even redefine the general – theological and ideological – perspective in which these activities were conceived and accomplished. This reinforces the idea that these documents, even when not master texts for stelae or display inscription but destined for foundation and memorial deposits, were perhaps repeatedly recited in ceremonies that accompanied building operations or the completion of decoration works. Inauguration ceremonies are explicitly mentioned in some texts (see e.g. 1, vi 35–53, which describes the jubilation at the end of the work – *hīdāti rišāti zamāri taknī*, l. 41 – and the participation of

rabûte u nišē mātiya at the ritual banquets *tākultu u qerēti*, ll. 49–50); in others, references to the presence of participants/spectators seem to be made (76, 17 *kabtûte šehrûte mārāt šarri*, in fragmentary and difficult contexts; the text comes from a private house). The relationship between the royal records and ritual texts is especially evident in texts relating to the restoration of divine statues, such as the inscription from Nineveh referring to the refurbishment of the images of Babylonian gods (no. 48), for which the clear echo of theological questions and connections with the *mis pî* ritual have been highlighted (see the references in the RINAP volume). Allusions to and correspondences with literary texts are another clue of the inclusion of these messages in a variously articulated communication system, because this language and imagery clearly functioned to integrate the description of the reign into that of divine designs. Furthermore, as far as war narrative is concerned, it could be visualized in rituals of triumph and humiliation of enemies – such as those described as a living image of royal power and success (1, iii 35–42. iv 25–31).

Monumental inscriptions, or copies from inscriptions on statues and stelae, preserve texts of various length and character, thus attesting to a varied strategy of diffusion of the royal message, which seemingly had its apex in the Levant, a crucial area of Esarhaddon’s military intervention and on the way to Egypt (table 1):

Tab. 1: Monumental inscriptions (in italics the texts on tablets that may have been drafts for, or copies from, a monument).

text	description	place	date and notes
44	copy on clay tablet of inscription on a statue of Marduk	Kuyunjik	incomplete; introduced by <i>anāku</i> RN; benediction of Marduk invoked on the future prince includes the sentence: <i>qabû šemû u magāru kittu u mišaru [ay iṣṣar]kâ pî tenēšētišu</i>
45	copy on clay tablet of inscription on a statue of Bēl	Kuyunjik	incomplete; colophon of Marduk-šākin-šumi and Nabû-zēra-ikšur
46	<i>probably copy on clay tablet of an inscription in archaic script</i>	Kuyunjik	<i>fragment; probably dedicatory inscription</i>
48	3 copies on clay tablets; one states it is a copy from a stela	Kuyunjik	seemingly after the Egyptian campaign of 671; refurbishment of divine statues; building of Eḫursaggalkurkurra (Assur) and Esagil (Babylon)
60	<i>copy on alabaster tablet; clay tablet</i>	Assur; Kuyunjik	<i>after Du’ūzu 671; reconstruction of Eḫursaggalkurkurra; completion of divine statues and transportation to Babylon</i>
61–63	inscriptions on limestone blocks	Assur	brief inscriptions identifying the construction of the gatehouse
64	inscriptions on limestone blocks	Assur gate-house	Assurbanipal introduced in the <i>bīt redūti</i> (after Ajjāru 672)

³ *lumāše tamšil šitir šumīya*, “hieroglyphs/astroglyphs, representing the writing of my name” (104, vii 9–12), cf. *sub* 115 for discussion and previous bibliography.

⁴ On glazed brick decoration cf. Nadali (2006) with previous bibliography.

⁵ But see discussion in Reade (1972). For examples of pictorial representation from Kalḫu see Mallowan (1966, 379 f.), for Til Barsip and chronological discussion Tomabechi (1983/1984).

<i>text</i>	<i>description</i>	<i>place</i>	<i>date and notes</i>
87	limestone slab	Negub tunnel (Kalḫu)	refurbishment of the hydraulic works of Assurnāṣirpal II ⁶
97	stela	Tell Ahmar	later in the reign(?); partially preserved; campaigns against the Arabs; summary of other campaigns
98	stela	Zinçirli	after Du'ūzu 671; against Taḥarqa king of Egypt
99	copy on clay tablet (in 2 fragments?) of a bull colossi inscription ⁷	Kuyunjik	in preserved royal epithets concordances with 98
102	stela	Qaqun	campaign to Egypt
103	rock inscription; NA and NB script	Nahr el-Kelb	after Du'ūzu 671; conquest of Memphis; booty from Taḥarqa's palace; partially preserved
114	cuboid black stone with archaizing Bab. script	Babylon?	673/672; ⁸ reconstruction of Esagil and Babylon
115.1	stone monument	Babylon?	hieroglyphs
2010	bronze relief depicting the king and Naqī'a		<i>mis pi</i> and other rituals mentioned in the preserved fragment

2. The date and occasion of composition are reflected first of all in varying introductory sections of the inscriptions. This is not the place for a full evaluation of this aspect, but some general observations, on the basis the better preserved and more extended exemplars, seem appropriate.

Various texts begin with a reference to the building of the armory or to the royal palace where the inscribed object belongs. Some of them are brief labels, others incorporate additional sections. The more generally attested basic titulary ("great king, mighty king, king of the totality, king of Assyria, governor of Babylon, king of Sumer and Akkad", to which after Du'ūzu 671 the title referring to the conquest of Egypt was added) reflects, as discussed by Porter (1993), both the Assyrian and Babylonian definition of kingship. Variations of this basic formula concern especially the mention of the ancestors Sargon and Sennacherib and the definition of rulership over Babylonia, alternatively defined by the term *GĪR.NĪTA*, *šakkanakku*, "governor", or by the title *LUGAL*. In the inscriptions from Nineveh edited as no. 1 the genealogy is omitted, but clearly illustrated in the following account of Esarhaddon's accession to the throne. Text 20, a limestone slab which might come from Nineveh, Kalḫu, or Tarbiṣu, maintains the genealogy (like the shorter texts 21, 22, and the slightly longer 24), but adds the title of "king of (Lower) Egypt, Upper Egypt, Kush". Inscriptions on vessels 25 and 28 use the title "king

of Karduniaš" instead of simply "governor of Babylon". The latter, more usual, title appears in commemorative inscriptions for the gatehouse of the palace in Assur, 61–63, which also mention the king's father Sennacherib. In texts from the armory (more precisely, found at the gate of Fort Shalmaneser) titles and genealogy reflect those used in texts 1 and 2; in inscriptions from the Southwest Palace of Kalḫu the title referring to the conquest of Egypt is used, with the addition, in 84–86 – which also maintain the mention of Sennacherib – of the reference to the rebuilding of temples in Assur and Babylon.

These varying formulations of the royal titulary also occur in inscriptions beginning with a dedication to the gods. Texts 68–69 from Assur combine the title of king of Karduniaš with that of "king of kings of Egypt". Short dedicatory inscriptions to Marduk from Babylon (119–125) record the title "king of Babylon", such as brick inscriptions 131 and 132 from Nippur and 138 from Uruk/Warka, whereas texts 137 and 139 from Warka choose the title *GĪR.NĪTA*, "governor". Longer inscriptions, such as text 128 for the goddess Queen of Nippur, 129 for Enlil in Nippur, 133 and 134 for Ištar of Uruk, and 135 and 136 for Nanāya of Uruk, include longer epithet sections describing royal piety and achievements with a focus on the erection of temples. In these texts from Nippur and Uruk the basic institutional titulary, characterized by the title "governor" of Babylon, may also include the reference to the ancient founders of the Assur lineage originating from Bēl-bāni, son of Adasi – which ends a lengthy series of epithets concerning the care of temples and rites (texts 128, 129, 133) – thus affirming an Assyrian tradition of kingship.

Inscriptions from stelae add an introduction describing the divine pantheon, in the act of bestowing royal power and authority, before the king's titulary. In text

⁶ A new addition to the bibliographical references is Morandi Bonacossi/Iamoni (2015).

⁷ Texts 100–101 are also recognized as showing concordances with text 98. Due to their fragmentary condition it is impossible to state if they belong together and are, like 99, copies from or for a monumental inscription; in this case they might attest to the Nineveh master text of the Zinçirli inscription or a similar one.

⁸ Cf. Novotny (2015, 159).

48, inscribed on a stela but only known from copies on clay tablets, the passage is introduced by *inūma*, which opens the list of the gods and sets the scene for the choice of the king according to a well-established model. Royal titulary is introduced by the syntactical correspondent *ina ūmēšuma anāku* (l. 61) and includes, next to the basic titles, the rulership over Subartu, Amurru, Gutium, Ḫatti, Dilmun, Magan, and Meluhḫa. This text is a manifesto of reconciliation with extensive ritual and theological explanations of why and how Babylonian gods' statues had to be refurbished in the Assur workshop. Significantly, in the first part the warlike character of some gods is described in detail: Marduk is the one who has the power to *šuddū* and *šūšubu*, depopulate and resettle, then Nergal, Agušaya and the Sibitti with their destructive powers are invoked. Destructive forces are part of the cosmos, and reconciliation is a divine decision that the king is able to interpret and accomplish correctly.⁹

The stela from Zinçirli (98) simply juxtaposes the royal titulary after the list of the gods, without a syntactical connection. Esarhaddon is both governor of Babylon and king of Karduniaš – thus likely heir of the composite tradition of kingship of that kingdom – as well as king of kings of Egypt and Kush. He is son of Sennacherib and grandson of Sargon and descendant of the Assur lineage and by divine decree he has full authority and force. A special insistence on the pronoun *anāku*, independent or as the stative suffix (especially rev. 19–22), emphasizes that full power legitimately is in his hands and that he is fully able to perpetuate and to develop Assyrian control in the Levant. The following narration of the conquest of Egypt is unequivocal proof. Similar, although in a shorter version, are the epithets listed in the rock inscription 103. The military epithets of text 98 have parallels in fragmentary tablets from Nineveh, which preserve some small sections (99–101).

Quite frequently, texts begin directly with the king's titulary introduced by *anāku Aššur-aḫu-iddina* (44, 45, 64, 94, 95) or *anāku Aššur-etel-ilāni-mukin-apli*, Esarhaddon's "throne" name (74–75). The earliest inscriptions from Nineveh and Kalḫu, i. e. composed around 677/6, show an almost standard text with reference to the governorship of Babylon. Variation is however connected with the specific function of the inscriptions, as e. g. in text 44–45, copied from divine statues' pedestals, that, as far as they are preserved, record the image of a pious and beneficent ruler. The accent on the priestly epithets is evident in texts 57, 58 and 59, composed at the beginning of Esarhaddon's reign

for the reconstruction of the Ešarra, and which do not mention Babylon. In later texts from Assur the perspective is wider and more balanced. In text 93, dated to 672 and referring to the "succession treaty", the expression "the true shepherd who reorganized the confused people" is notable, as is the reflection in the titulary of theological questions: the king is said to have received from the gods as a gift the ability to create, build and renew (*banū epēšu uddušu*, l. 2) and bears therefore the epithets of *bānū bīt Aššur*, *ēpiš Esagil u Babili*, *muddiṣ ṣalam ilāni rabūti* (l. 3) – the same actions that the god of destruction accomplishes in respect to Marduk's apparel in the Erra Poem – thus summarising his deeds diffusely described in 57–59 for the Ešarra, and 104–117 for Esagil.

One of the most acute questions was evidently the relationship with Babylon, as reflected in the choice between Assyrian or Babylonian representations of kingship, as well as the mention of the predecessors and especially Sennacherib. These questions have already been the object of scholarly attention, particularly by B. Porter, who notices the "Babylonian" definition of kingship from the very outset of inscription Bab. A (= text 104) by means of aptly chosen titles (1993, 95 ff.). From a broader consideration of the epigraphical materials of different types and provenances, it seems however that in the very definition of the status of Esarhaddon as king of Babylon, scribal conventions have a role in the choice of the title. Table 2 summarises these variations:

Tab. 2: Titles concerning Babylon

GĪR.NÍTA KÁ.DINGIR(.RA) ^{ki} / TIN. TIR ^{ki} / KÁ.DIŠ	1, 2, 20, 61–63, 84, 85, 133–136, 137, 139, 99, 93, 94, 95, 104, 105, 106, 113, 114
MAN ^{kur} kar- ^{dun} -ia- ^{āš} / MAN KÁ.DIŠ.(DIŠ) / MAN TIN.TIR ^{ki} / MAN KÁ.DINGIR.RA ^{ki}	25, 28, 68–69, 119–125, 131, 132, 138
GĪR.NÍTA KÁ.DINGIR.RA. ^{ki} MAN ^{kur} kar- ^{dun} -ia- ^{āš} DŪ-šū-un	98, 103

3. Military efforts and conquests are diffusely and comprehensively narrated in texts 1–8,¹⁰ and in the fragmentarily preserved texts 30–32, 34–40, and 60. In texts 77–79 (per-

¹⁰ Text 9 is unfortunately too fragmentary to be properly understood; it is however interesting insofar as the remaining sections provide a list of various professionals, possibly deported from Egypt, and a list of officials (recorded by name) appointed to a list of towns. Whether these towns, whose names appear to reflect Assyrian ideological and religious concepts similarly to those renamed in text 33 for the region of Šubria, are connected with the Egyptian campaign remains speculation.

⁹ The theological principles are the same expressed in the Erra Poem with which this inscription has various points of contact.

taining to and coming from Kalḫu) and 93 (from Assur, referring to the construction of Assurbanipal's palace in Tarbiṣu) the account is worded in relative sentences, or epithets which describe the virtues and deeds of the king; only occasionally (77, 27. 36; 78, 24 f.; 79, 24 f.; 93, 13) does it switch to the first person in formulaic phrases (*alme akšud ašlula ...*, etc.). Text 33, the letter to the god Aššur, reports on the Šupria campaign, and the monumental stelae or rock inscriptions describe primarily some specific sectors of military operations, such as those in the west (Egypt: 97, 98 and 103).

The narrative text with which the volume opens commemorates the rebuilding of the armory at Nineveh, in the Nebi Yunus area where also Sennacherib worked, and is attested by many exemplars on hexagonal clay prisms (exemplars 1.1–33) and also known in variant versions (texts 2–8). Text 1 commemorates the (re)construction of the armory or review palace (*ēkal māšarti*, V 40) which also functioned as royal residence (*mūšab bēlūtiya*, 1, vi 3) besides the Southwest Palace. On the other hand, it appears that Esarhaddon's construction works also concentrated on an analogous building in Kalhu, where the Northwest Palace was still in function and where the king undertook the construction of another palace; these seem to have completed the system of the “twin palaces”, also recognized for Sargon and Sennacherib, and which might have been used respectively for the state administration and the military organization.¹¹ It is certainly fitting that

the borders of the empire were defined in the commemorative inscriptions of these palaces with a military function.

Although the provenience of each exemplar is often unknown or uncertain, some observations may be proposed by combining the two perspectives adopted in the volume – identification of a “text” and distribution in time and space of the “exemplars”. An attentive comparison of subgroups of texts, those relating to the restoration of the Aššur's temple and those referring to the restoration of Babylon, has most recently allowed J. Novotny (2014, 2015) to propose a new chronological distribution of texts in these subgroups.

In the case of the texts from Nineveh, the exemplars with a preserved date allow us to appreciate the distribution of texts 1–3 especially, and to correlate differences with chronology, as evidenced by table 3, where the inclusion of the narrative of the fight against the rebel brothers (the so-called “apology”¹²) has been indicated. The updating of the text, and in some cases the insertion of this part, appears to have occurred at various times: after the defeat in Egypt in Addaru of the 7th year (674), known from the Chronicles, and before the campaign in Šupria against the rebels who took refuge there (673); just before and probably in connection with the ceremony of the *adē* for the succession (672); after the victorious campaign against Egypt of 671 (cf. text 8):

Tab. 3: Texts commemorating the rebuilding of the Armory

text.exemplar	provenance	date	Apology
2.1	Nineveh, Nebi Yunus, in the arsenal mud brick terrace	22 Ayyāru (II), Banbā (676)	
2.2	Nineveh, Nebi Yunus(?)	18 Abu (V) []	
2.3	Nineveh(?)		
2.4	Nineveh(?)		
2.5	Nineveh		
2.6	Nineveh		
3	Nineveh	18 Abu (V) []	
1.2	Nineveh	month Pit-bābi in the Elamite calendar, probably Du'ūzu (IV), Atar-ili (673)	X
1.6 ¹³	Nineveh Area SH	month Pit-bābi, probably Du'ūzu (IV), Atar-ili (673)	X
1.7		Bēlet-ili (Elam. calender, Abu = V), year []	[]

¹¹ Kertai (2011, 83f., and 2015, 155–165) for general descriptions with previous bibliography.

¹² Tadmor (1983). See most recently Knapp (2015, chap. 8) with a reconsideration of the topic and a critical discussion of previous studies.

¹³ Cf. Knapp (2015, 329) for the correction of the exemplar number (1.16 in RINAP) after Novotny's suggestion. Number 1.26 is erroneously transcribed 1.27 in the translation.

text.exemplar	provenance	date	Apology
1.1	Nineveh Area SH	Addaru (XII), Atar-ili (673)	X
1.26	Nineveh Area SH	Addaru, Atar-ili (673)	X
1.9	Nineveh Area SH		X
1.29	Nineveh IT. N.	Nisannu (I), Nabû-bēli-ušur (672)	[]
1.8	Nineveh		[]
1.12	Nineveh		[]
1.13	Nineveh		[]
1.14	Nineveh		[]
1.15	Nineveh		[]
1.17	Nineveh		X
1.27	Nineveh		
1.28	Nineveh		?
1.11	Assur hE91		[]
1.32	Assur city area South		X
1.33	Assur city area		[]
1.3	Susa		X
1.4	Susa		X
SM 410	Suleimaniya ¹⁴		

The following texts are partially preserved:

4	Nineveh, Nebi Yunus		
5	Nineveh		X
6 octagonal p.	Nineveh, IT.KK.6		X
7			
8 hollow p.	Nineveh	after Du'ūzu 671	

The sequence of military campaigns recorded in text 2 is the following: Abdi-milkūti of Sidon (i 14–37), Sanda-uarri of Kundi and Sissû and Abdi-milkūti of Sidon (i 38–56), Arzâ in the Brook of Egypt (i 57–63), Teušpa Cimmerian (ii 1–4), Cilicia and Tabal (ii 5–15), Til-Ašurri (ii 16–19), Mannean people (ii 20–23), Nabû-zēr-kitti-lišir of Sealand (ii 24–33), Šamaš-ibni of Bīt-Dakkūri (ii 34–45), support for Hazael king of the Arabs (ii 46–iii 62) and tribute (iii 1–8), Bāzu (iii 9–36), support for Bēl-iqīša of Gambulu (iii 37–52), Medes (iii 53–iv 20). In text 3 the episode of Nabû-zēr-kitti-lišir of Sealand is moved to the beginning (i 26'–28'), according to Tadmor (2004), to be in a position of greater prominence, because this Chaldean governor of Sealand did not respect the oath sworn to Sennacherib and became a paradigmatic example to admonish would-be future transgressors. His attitude is chronologically connected with the turmoils accompanying the royal suc-

cession and it may be inferred that it was considered analogous to that of Esarhaddon's brothers, since all of them disregarded the dynastic pact.

The narrative of text 1 shows a clearer geographical coherence in the progression of the conquests and in various points stigmatizes the enemies' reliance on illusory means of defence: starting from the south (with Nabû-zēr-kitti-lišir of Sealand, ii 40–64), dealing with the western sector whose order was already fixed in the previous account (Abdi-milkūti of Sidon, ii 65–iii 19, who is caught *kīma nūni ina qereb tâmti*, “like a fish from the midst of the sea”; Sanda-uarri of Kundi and Sissû, *kīma iššūri ultu qereb šadî*, iii 20–38; Arzâ in the Brook of Egypt, iii 39–42, who was shown alive, like the severed heads of the above mentioned leaders, in Nineveh; Teušpa Cimmerian, iii 43–46, “whose home is remote”, *rūqu*”; Cilicia in inaccessible mountains, and Tabal, with mighty mountains, iii 47–55), moving to the eastern sector (Til-Ašurri, iii 56–58; Mannean people, iii 59–61, Šamaš-ibni of Bīt-Dakkūri, iii 62–70), which has possibly a *trait-d'union* in Gambulu (Ša-pī-bēl, iii 71–83) with the south-west, *i.e.* the Arabs (iv 1–31). Then two opposite but similar places such as

¹⁴ The fragment, hardly legible, is published by Radner (2011, 101 f.), who recognizes a concordance with text 1; it is kept in the local museum, but, as the editor states, “no conclusive information regarding its provenance” is given.

Media (iv 32–52) and Bāzu (iv 53–77) are mentioned. They share characteristics that qualify them as liminal spaces, being distant and never reached before. Moreover, significantly enough, the defeat of the rebellious brothers and the new diplomatic relationships with Elam¹⁵ occupy symmetric positions in the narrative. The former (i 8–ii 11) is followed by a titulary/hymnic section (ii 12–39); the latter (v 26–33) is preceded by another hymnic section (iv 78–v 9), so that the two episodes occupy beginning and end of the war section.

All in all, it seems that the later version highlights correspondences and relates the events with the purpose of bringing out meaningful symmetries, defining the “circle” of Assyrian control that included areas until then external, thus retracing and expanding previous borders according to the Assyrian imperial mission. This was crucial *vis-à-vis* a seemingly widespread movement of revolt in the west (from the Phoenician cities to Cilicia and Melid) and following the defeat suffered in Egypt in 674. The record of the campaign against Šubria is lacking, because the composition of the inscription antedates it. Its inclusion in the royal records occurs only, as far as preserved, in the incomplete text 34 and 60,¹⁶ and in the Letter to Aššur (no. 33) entirely devoted to that campaign. Both texts 60 and 33, very succinctly the first, diffusely the latter, characterize the king of Šubria as insubmissive. Due to these scanty references in inscriptions, the relevance of the campaign for affirming Esarhaddon’s power and military prowess is difficult to evaluate; it can however be recognized that the 673/2 redaction of the inscriptions, with a stress on military activity, was meant to contrast the negative effects of the Egyptian setback and prepare the succession, as suggested by the date of text 77.6 from Kalḫu (see below).

Another interesting peculiarity is the date according to the Elamite calendar given in some of the exemplars of text 1, a fact that can be connected with the special

relationship with that kingdom and dynasty, especially significant when the dramatic dynastic crisis of Assyria and the shifted focus of Assyrian military strategy to the west with the attack to Egypt are considered. A relationship that probably also fostered exchange of specialists and cultural contacts.¹⁷ It is perhaps meaningful that the astronomical phenomena portending favourably for the rebuilding of Babylon in one case are said to occur in the “Elamite” month Pīt-bābi (as narrated in text 104, ii 39).

The preserved dates of texts 2 and 1 (Nineveh) also occur in texts 78 and 77 (Kalḫu): the years 676 and 672. Two exemplars of text no. 77 bear a 672 date: 77.1 is dated Abu (V) 5, 672; 77.6 Ayyāru (II) 18, 672, “when the treaty concerning Ashurbanipal, the senior son of the king, who (resides in) the House of Succession, was made”.¹⁸ This indicates that the building works proceeded in parallel, that the recording/celebration ceremonies concerning the works in both towns were made at the same time, and that they were connected with the dynastic pact.

The exposition formula based on relative and participial sentences used in the texts from Kalḫu is also partly employed in text 2, *i. e.* the more ancient versions of the Nineveh armory inscription – which however inserts some narrative sequences with finite verbs – as well as in text 93 from Assur. It seems therefore that the texts were composed starting from a common model, which was more decidedly reworded in Nineveh but maintained in Kalḫu.¹⁹

The parallelism between Nineveh and Kalḫu, where the parallelism of the royal palaces is evidenced even by the similarity of the royal message, can be considered in the more general framework of Esarhaddon’s policy towards urban centres and urban elites. His care for the administrative and military directive centres (Nineveh and Kalḫu) is paired with that for the ancient seat of Assyrian kingship (Assur). Esarhaddon clearly states his origin from Assur and his descent from the genuine Assur dynasty.²⁰ This is clearly expressed in text 48, which is a copy from a monumental inscription and which also states the centrality of Assur in religious matters: the city is indicated

¹⁵ The ‘Esarhaddon Chronicle’ records that in Addaru 674 Elam returned the statue of Ishtar and other gods of Akkad to Babylonia and in text 105 (= Bab C) vii 5–11 Esarhaddon states that he returned gods plundered from Assyria and Elam to their places in Babylonia. This information implies the establishment of good relations with Elam after the death of Ḫumban-ḫaltaš in 675 and the enthronement of Ur-taku, with whom an *adē* was seemingly stipulated as alluded to in a letter (CT 54, 580, see Waters 2000, 43). It may be compared with the list of gifts and divine effects given to the king of Elam recorded in SAA 7, 60; see also SAA 10, 359. On the western sector, the Assyrian setback in Egypt is dated to Addaru (XII) 674 in the Chronicles.

¹⁶ 34 preserves only the reference to the provincialization of the region; in text 60 the sequence of the campaigns is updated: Cimmerians, Brook of Egypt, Bāzu, Dilmun, Šubria, Tyre, Egypt and Kush, Iadnana, Iaman, Tarsus. Unfortunately text 8, written after the campaign of 671, is fragmentary.

¹⁷ See Álvarez-Mon (2009) for a discussion of similar issues in Ashurbanipal’s time.

¹⁸ As Frahm (2009, 35) points out, elaborating on a Tadmor’s suggestion: the Nin. A inscription is to be interpreted as an „ideologische *praeparatio*“ for the succession of year 672.

¹⁹ See Eph’al/Tadmor (2006, 155–162) for a more detailed comparison, that notes among other differences the inclusion in the cylinders from Kalḫu of the names of cities of Bāzu, but not of their kings, as in text 1 from Nineveh.

²⁰ In the introduction to the volume Leichty puts forward the hypothesis of an Aramean origin of the dynasty. What matters is however Esarhaddon’s explicit assertion of the Assur lineage.

by the gods to be the workshop for the reconstruction of divine statues from Babylonian towns. At the same time the pro-Assyrian party in Babylonian and southern towns was gratified by the attention given to local temples, as e.g. the Eanna of Uruk.

4. Lastly, a general consideration might emerge from an overall view of the texts. The idea of the pacification of the empire, which finds its accomplishment in the reconstruction of Babylon, was certainly conceived early in Esarhaddon's reign, as suggested by the probable date of 678 for text 108 (Bab. G), unfortunately incompletely preserved,²¹ and slightly later date of text 116 (Bab. B), where the narrative of Marduk's reconciliation and the occurrence of heavenly omens of pacification and concordance is fully developed. The implementation of this project proved to be particularly difficult, either due to the resistance of an adversary party that favoured Esarhaddon's brothers, or because of the hostility toward his policy.²² The conspiracy of Sasi and the execution of the magnates in 670 clearly reveal that problems persisted and letters concerning the attempted revolt suggest that the search for legitimization by ritual means (extispicy, prophecy) was undertaken by Esarhaddon's adversaries too (Nissinen 1998, 107–153). In this climate, that was certainly fostered by the disgraceful deaths of Esarhaddon's predecessors, the king had to carefully fix and illustrate his adherence to a protocol of ritually correct decision-making. On the other hand, Esarhaddon's attention to urban elites in various towns and for their religious symbols was a strategy to win a wider consensus, as illustrated by the comprehensive description of the king's activities in various towns given in text 54, composed after the 671 campaign to Egypt, which provided a rich war booty that was used to decorate the temples of Sumer and Akkad.

The attack on Šubria is a crucial and problematic episode. It was seemingly planned in an attempt to quell opposition, since the local king is accused of harbouring fugitives, perhaps in the sanctuary of Uppume (Radner 2012). The identity of the fugitives is not revealed, and it is not known if they were the rebel brothers and their supporters; another hypothetical scenario for the campaign can be suggested by a possible connection with events following the campaign against Mugallu of Melid in 675, which is reported only by the Chronicles. Text 33, the *Gottesbrief* which reports the Šubria events to god Aššur,

ends with the schematic mention of the soldiers fallen in the campaign, as did the letter addressed to the god by Sargon; this seemingly standardized part, we might hypothesize, was meant to be implemented during a ceremony involving the names of the deceased soldiers from three chosen corps of the army, or to commemorate them collectively.²³ Was this ritual a measure to cure an acute wound in Assyrian society that was a consequence of the civil war, or a ceremony modeled on that of Sargon for his eighth campaign against Urartu and Mušasir, suggested by the similarities of the situation, which entailed attacking renowned sanctuaries?

Vis-à-vis the dramatic events of a turbulent and contested succession, continuous opposition, bloody cleansing operations, and revolts in key enclaves in the Levant, it appears that the inscriptions highlighted and proposed various kinds of correspondences and meaningful inner analogies, as elements of order, to be combined with references to an incontrovertibly correct decision-making process founded on divine will and cosmic harmony. The gods and temples of Assyria and Babylonia especially were shown in harmonious correspondence, as well as heaven and earth as revealed by ominous signs. This message, the same conveyed in the famous letter of the king's exorcist Adad-šumu-ušur (SAA 10, 185), was seemingly spread throughout the main centres of the empire and exported outside it.

Summing up these brief notes, it appears that the new RINAP edition, which continues the fundamental project of providing standardized, complete, and up-to-date texts of Mesopotamian royal inscriptions, stimulates a better appreciation of the character of Esarhaddon's representation of his reign, which was elaborated along traditional lines but at the same time highly innovative with respect to the "Assyrian" style, and suggests a fine-grained investigation of the characteristics of the royal message and new means of diffusion of it in this dramatic phase of Assyrian history.

²¹ A new edition by Novotny (2015) has since appeared, with additions and a discussion of the chronology.

²² Knapp (2015) has most recently considered the possibility of an opposition to the military campaigns against Egypt.

²³ On the draft character of the text see Eph'al/Tadmor (2006, 163–168).

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